

Part 2 of 2

# WRITING THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Francesca Gacho, Graduate Writing Coach  
USC Annenberg School of Communication  
fgacho@usc.edu | cmgtwriting.uscannenberg.org

# GOALS OF THIS WEBINAR

Discuss

- steps to take once you have a research question for the literature review

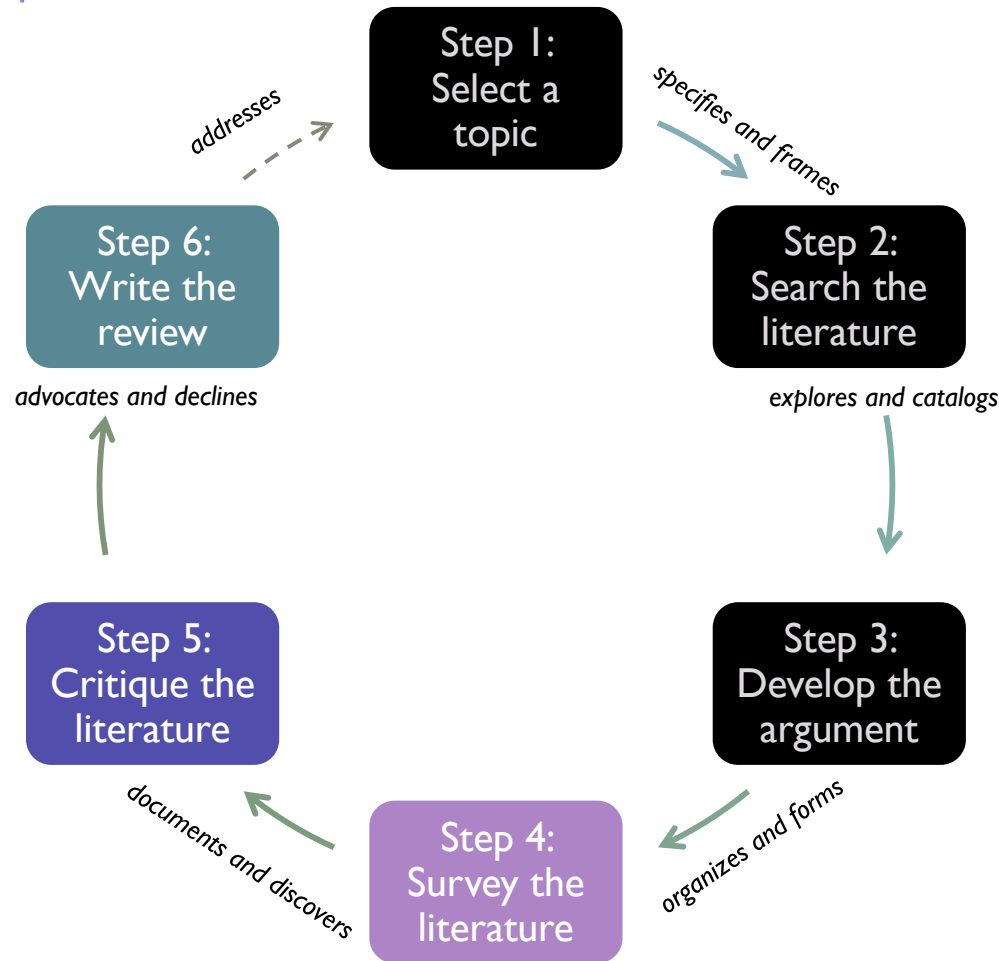
Establish

- critical questions to engage with to plan the literature review

Identify

- Identify best practices for composing the literature review

# THE LITERATURE REVIEW PROCESS



**Step 4 – Data  
Evaluation  
Steps 5 & 6 –  
Analysis and  
Interpretation**

*The Literature Review Model from Machi & McEvoy,  
The Literature Review: Six Steps to Success, 2nd edition.*

FRANCESCA GACHO, GRADUATE WRITING COACH, FGACHO@USC.EDU

# STEP 4: SURVEYING THE LITERATURE

Narrow and focused

Establishing patterns about what other scholars have said

Focus is on discovering, organizing, documenting sources into “chunks”

Investigates opinions and findings of other scholars

Draws relationships among the different scholars & their findings

# WHERE TO START?

- What's your RESEARCH QUESTION?
  - Based on your RQ, can you identify 2-3 subtopics or subthemes?
    - Ex. How can the issue of workplace bullying be better addressed in terms of its organizational and individual impact?
    - Themes or “buckets”
    - Subthemes\*
- \*You get these after you've done some readings

# USING FOCUS QUESTIONS TO FIND SOURCES

RQ: How can the issue of workplace bullying be better addressed in terms of its organizational and individual impact?

workplace bullying

*addressed in  
organizational impact*

*addressed in individual  
impact*



Focus questions can help you “map” how you will need to discuss the key concepts in your RESEARCH QUESTION.

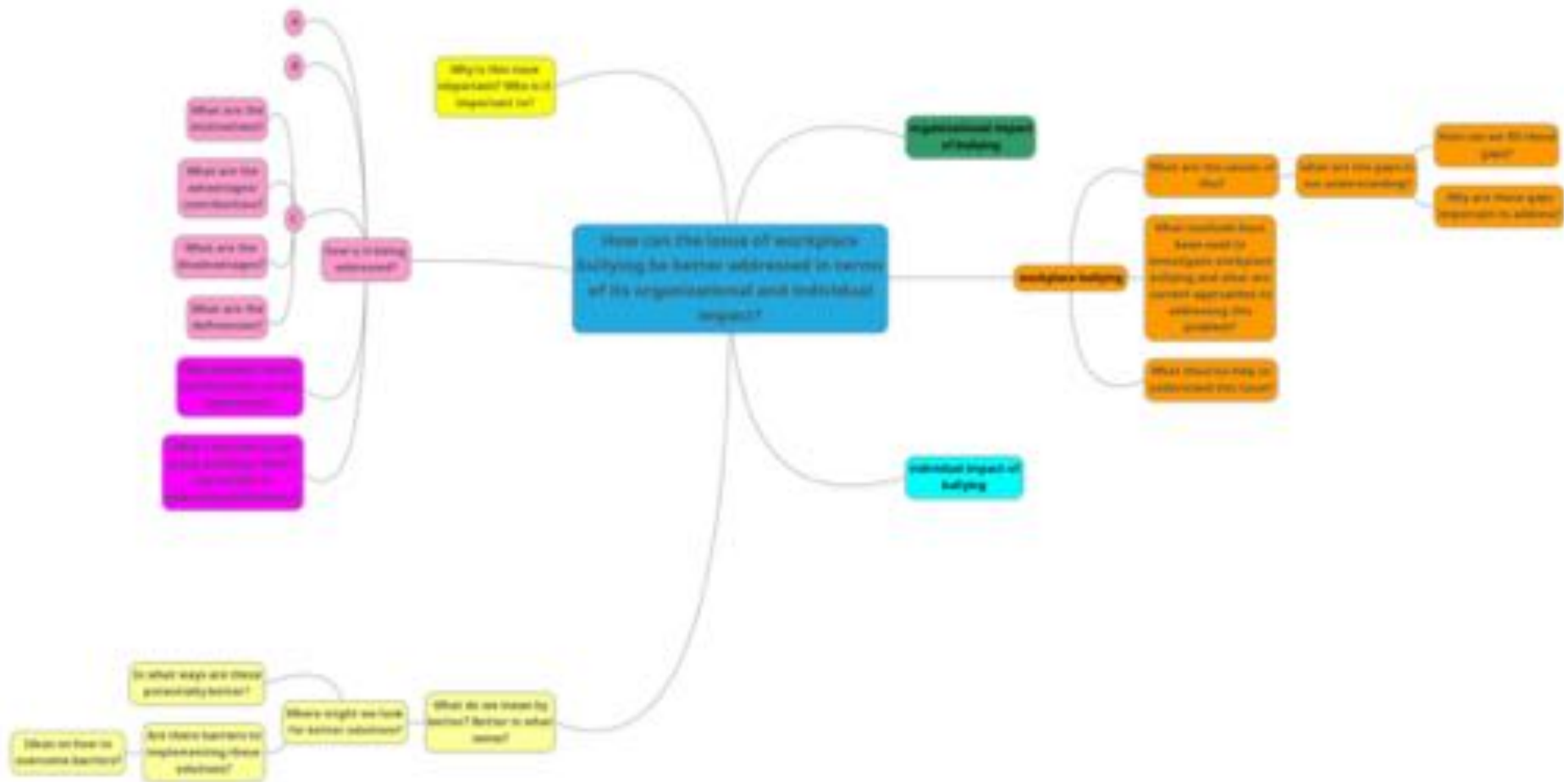
# GENERIC FOCUS QUESTIONS

Motivations for research: (a) significance of the area; (b) gap or deficiency in existing knowledge.

Sources for new ideas/hypothesis

Theory to guide where to look for answers

*Look for opportunities for follow up questions and links/connections!*



# MINDMUP DEMO

Using mind maps to identify questions about your RQ



## STEP 5: CRITIQUING THE LITERATURE

- Here, “critiquing” does not always mean “looking for flaws or bad things about the sources.”
- By “critiquing,” we also mean engaging with the ideas and findings of others and questioning them.
- We are looking for:
  - Consensus
  - Dissent
  - Inconsistencies
  - Limitations
  - Gaps
  - Potential implications or repercussions, etc.
- Use the Parts of the Article Handout for individual sources

# OPTIONS FOR EXPRESSING YOUR IDEAS

Compare and contrast

- views of different authors.

Critique

- previous work.

Highlight

- gaps in existing research.

Show

- how your work relates to previous work.

Identify

- problems, conflicts, debates, gaps.

Define

- a research area in a new way.

Question

- previous results.

## SAMPLE PARAGRAPH: CRITIQUE OF SOURCES

Only two studies explored the role of an organisation's advertising on consumer trust repair (Cleeren et al., 2008; Gill, 2008). These studies argued that an organisation's advertising can recover consumer trust. Specifically, Cleeren et al. (2008) found that after salmonella poisoning, an organisation's advertising led to improved consumer trust. Gill (2008) theorised that brand advertising (specifically with an online focus) restores consumers' trust in the banking sector. However, both studies are limited; therefore, more research studies on the role of advertising are needed. For example, Cleeren et al. (2008) discussed about reestablished consumer's trust and repurchasing simultaneously. This is problematic because purchasing is not necessarily an act of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998). Because key concepts are not defined, it is not possible to establish whether repurchasing is understood by the authors as evidence of recovered trust. In addition, this study did not clearly specify the content of the advertising. Gill's (2008) study lacked theoretical arguments for why advertising would recover trust. Similarly, promise (Zhang, 2012) received very little attention from trust repair researchers. Specifically, Zhang's (2012) conceptual study focused on consumer trust repair. This study proposed that a promise facilitates trust repair. However, this proposition was not empirically tested and more research is required.

## SAMPLE PARAGRAPH: CRITIQUE OF SOURCES

**Only two studies explored** the role of an organisation's advertising on consumer trust repair (Cleeren et al., 2008; Gill, 2008). These studies argued that an organisation's advertising can recover consumer trust. **Specifically, Cleeren et al. (2008) found that** after salmonella poisoning, an organisation's advertising led to improved consumer trust. **Gill (2008) theorised that** brand advertising (specifically with an online focus) restores consumers' trust in the banking sector. **However, both studies are limited; therefore, more research studies on the role of advertising are needed.** For example, Cleeren et al. (2008) discussed about reestablished consumer's trust and repurchasing simultaneously. **This is problematic because** purchasing is not necessarily an act of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998). **Because key concepts are not defined, it is not possible to establish whether repurchasing is understood by the authors as evidence of recovered trust.** In addition, **this study did not clearly specify** the content of the advertising. **Gill's (2008) study lacked theoretical arguments** for why advertising would recover trust. **Similarly, promise (Zhang, 2012) received very little attention** from trust repair researchers. **Specifically, Zhang's (2012) conceptual study focused on** consumer trust repair. **This study proposed** that a promise facilitates trust repair. **However, this proposition was not empirically tested and more research is required.**

# PUTTING SOURCES TOGETHER

In literature reviews, you need to consider your individual sources alone *and in concert with other sources*.

To do this, you must (1) *know what each source is saying* and (2) *how the sources are “responding” to one another*.

Use a Literature Review Matrix  
OR an Article Analysis Matrix

# CREATING A LIT REVIEW MATRIX

Sample Health Science Review Matrix.xlsx

| Sample Review Matrix on the Use of Acupuncture for Treating Chronic Lower Back Pain  |                |  |          |   |  |  |                             |  |  |          |
|--|----------------|--|----------|---|--|--|-----------------------------|--|--|----------|
| REFERENCE & PURPOSE  |                |  | SUBJECTS |   |  | DATA   | VARIABLES                   |  | CONCLUSION   | COMMENTS |
| Author(s), Title, Journal  | Year Published | Purpose  | #        | Subject Characteristics   | Sample Design  | Year Data Collected                                    | Control                     | Intervention   |  |          |
| Cho YL, Song YK, Cha YL, Shin BC, Shin WL, Park HJ, Lee HS, Kim KW, Cho JH, Chung WS, Lee JH, Song SH. Acupuncture for chronic low back pain: A multicenter, randomized, patient-assessor blind, sham-controlled clinical trial. <i>Spine</i> .                              | 2013           | Is acupuncture superior to a placebo for treating chronic lower back pain?   | 138      | Similar baseline characteristics except for Oswestry Disability Index | Multicenter, randomized, patient-assessor blind, visual analogue scale (VAS) score, Oswestry Disability Index, general health status (Short Form-36), and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). Treated 14 weeks for 2x week.         | 2008-2010  | Sham acupuncture treatments | Real acupuncture treatments  | Based on VAS scores, acupuncture is effective  |          |
| Cherkin DC, Sherman KJ, Avins AL, Emswiler JH, Ichikawa L, Barlow WE, Delaney K, Hawkins R, Hamilton L, Pressman A, Khalifa PS, Deyo RA. A randomized trial comparing acupuncture, simulated acupuncture, and usual care for chronic low back pain. <i>Arch Intern Med</i> . | 2009           | Are needle placement and skin penetration important when using acupuncture to treat patients with chronic low back pain? | 638      | Similar baseline characteristics                                      | Randomized-control trial. Modified Roland Disability Questionnaire, pain scale from 0 ("not at all bothersome") to 10 ("extremely bothersome"). Physical and Mental Health Component Summary Scores. 18 treatments over 7 weeks. | [Recruitment occurred March 2004 through August 2006.] | Usual care                  | Individualized acupuncture, standardized acupuncture, or simulated acupuncture | Acupuncture found effective for chronic low back pain, but tailoring needling also unimportant. Unclear what this means. |          |

# ARTICLE ANALYSIS MATRIX (HANDOUT)

An Article Analysis Matrix can help you see the shared subthemes, findings, methods, and other aspects of the various studies you are including in your literature review.

After you use this matrix to identify the themes that are discussed in the literature, you can make an outline to organize your themes and the articles you will focus on as you write about each theme.

# HOW TO SUMMARIZE

Include only main points

Use precise and concise language

Re-read the original text to ensure your summary is accurate and nothing important has been changed or lost



# HOW TO PARAPHRASE

Identify the relationship(s) between clauses in the passage

Correctly and appropriately change vocabulary by using synonyms

Correctly and appropriately change word class

- Explanation (noun) → explain (verb)
- Mechanical (adjective) → mechanize (verb)
- Profitable (adjective) → profitability (noun)

Correctly and appropriately change word order

- ... the best explanation for the British location of the industrial revolution is found by studying demand factors
  - A focus on demand factors may help explain the UK origin of the industrial revolution.

# ORGANIZING THE LITERATURE REVIEW

## Write thematically

- Grouping themes, not authors

## Avoid listing sources

- What key patterns emerge?
- What do sources have in common?

## Do authors have similar arguments?

- Do they differ in methods?
- Frameworks?

## Sample Literature Review Outline Handout

# STEP 6: WRITING THE LIT REVIEW

## Summarize and Synthesize

- Summarize and synthesize your sources within each thematic paragraph as well as throughout the review. Recapitulate important features of a research study, but then synthesize it by **rephrasing** the study's significance and relating it to your own work or the work of other scholars you're citing.

## Use Evidence

- Your interpretation of the available sources must be backed up with evidence [citations] that demonstrates that what you are saying is valid.

## Use Quotes Sparingly

- Some short quotes are okay if you want to emphasize a point, or if what an author stated cannot be easily paraphrased. Sometimes you may need to quote certain terminology that was coined by the author, not common knowledge, or taken directly from the study. Do not use extensive quotes as a substitute for your own summary and interpretation of the literature.

# STEP 6: WRITING THE LIT REVIEW

## Use Caution When Paraphrasing

- When paraphrasing a source that is not your own, be sure to represent the author's information or opinions accurately and in your own words. Even when paraphrasing an author's work, you still must provide a citation to that work.

## Keep Your Own Voice

- Your voice [the writer's] should remain front and center. For example, weave references to other sources into what you are writing but maintain your own voice by starting and ending the paragraph with ***your own ideas and wording***.

## Be Selective

- Select only the most important points in each source to highlight in the review. The type of information you choose to mention should relate directly to the research problem, whether it is thematic, methodological, or chronological.

# SYNTHESIS: THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL LIT REVIEWS

In a synthesis, the writer makes a central or unique argument about a topic using several sources of information.

Synthesis shows relationships between sources by explicitly stating them.

# SAMPLE LIT REVIEW (SHORT VERSION)

**[Thesis Statement: Service-learning programs implemented in American undergraduate universities since 2000 have not only proven beneficial for the individuals or organizations being served but also for the participating students by offering opportunities for academic, emotional, and social growth.]**

Prior studies have identified many benefits for educational institutions from service-learning programs. These benefits include positive perceptions of the university by the community (Miron & Moely, 2006), enhanced student retention rates (Eyler et al., 2001), positive teaching and learning outcomes such as greater student involvement and participation in class (Caruso et al., 2007), and increased opportunities for meaningful research and scholarly activities (Strand et al., 2003).

In this study and related research, the individuals serving are university students who are collaborating with the community partner. The studied benefits to individuals serving include cultural awareness sharing (Crabtree, 2008), as well as networking opportunities and application of classroom learning to real-world issues (Bowen et al., 2009). Ultimately, service-learning stimulates student learning and engages students in their surrounding communities. Service learning creates new goals for students such as personal development, career development, moral development, academic achievement, and “reflective civic participation” (Lamb et al., 1998). These types of projects allow students to utilize material learned in the classroom to improve societal conditions.

Integrating concepts and theories learned in the classroom with everyday life makes students more capable of highlighting the importance of each course. Additionally, material learned in business courses can be applied to benefit the community through a variety of tangible services, such as business planning or marketing new programs.

# SUMMARY, EVALUATION, ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS

**[Thesis Statement: Service-learning programs implemented in American undergraduate universities since 2000 have not only proven beneficial for the individuals or organizations being served but also for the participating students by offering opportunities for academic, emotional, and social growth.]**

They say

Prior studies have identified many benefits for educational institutions from service-learning programs. These benefits include positive perceptions of the university by the community (Miron & Moely, 2006), enhanced student retention rates (Eyler et al., 2001), positive teaching and learning outcomes such as greater student involvement and participation in class (Caruso et al., 2007), and increased opportunities for meaningful research and scholarly activities (Strand et al., 2003).

*In this study and related research, the individuals serving are university students who are collaborating with the community partner.* The studied benefits to individuals serving include cultural awareness sharing (Crabtree, 2008), as well as networking opportunities and application of classroom learning to real-world issues (Bowen et al., 2009). Ultimately, service-learning stimulates student learning and engages students in their surrounding communities.

I say

Service learning creates new goals for students such as personal development, career development, moral development, academic achievement, and “reflective civic participation” (Lamb et al., 1998). These types of projects allow students to utilize material learned in the classroom to improve societal conditions.

Findings suggest that integrating concepts and theories learned in the classroom with everyday life makes students more capable of highlighting the importance of each course. Additionally, material learned in business courses can be applied to benefit the community through a variety of tangible services, such as business planning or marketing new programs.

# UNREVISED PARAGRAPH FOR LIT REVIEW

Much of the literature agrees that capital punishment is not a crime deterrent. According to Judy Pennington in an interview with Helen Prejean, crime rates in New Orleans went up in the eight weeks following executions. Jimmy Dunne notes that crime rates often go up in the first two or three months following an execution. “Death and the American” argues that America’s crime rate as a whole has increased drastically since the re-instatement of the death penalty in the 1960s. This article notes that 700 crimes are committed for every 100,000 Americans. Helen Prejean cites Ellis in her book to note that in 1980 500,000 people were behind bars and in 1990 that figure rose to 1.1 million.



# REVISED PARAGRAPHS

The literature on capital punishment suggests that it fails as a deterrent in two key ways. First, much of the literature suggests that capital punishment does not lower the crime rate. Helen Prejean, in *Deadman Walking*, clearly notes that capital punishment does little to lower the crime rate. Prejean argues that the “evidence that executions do not deter crime is conclusive [...] the U.S. murder rate is no higher in states that do not have the death penalty than those who do” (110). Prejean’s point is reiterated from a historical perspective in “Death and the American.” Here, the author notes that despite the social and economic upheavals that occurred from the 1930s to the 1960s, the crime rate barely changed (2). However, after the reinstatement of the death penalty in the 1960s, the author notes that “crime rates soared” (2). Steven Hawkins points out that law enforcement officials also agree that the death penalty has failed to stop crime. He explains that a 1995 Peter D. Hart Research Associates survey found that police chiefs believe the death penalty to be “the least effective way of reducing crime” (1).

Some of the literature suggests that, in addition to failing to lower the crime rate, capital punishment can lead to more crime. In an interview with Helen Prejean, Judy Pennington notes that in 1987, the crime rate in New Orleans went up 16.3 percent in the quarter following eight executions (7). In *Deadman Walking*, Prejean elaborates on her position that capital punishment can be related to an increase in crime. She notes that in Canada in 1975, the murder rate peaked “one year *before* the death penalty was abolished” (110). Capital punishment opponents like Thurgood Marshall and Donald Cabana agree with Prejean that capital punishment has failed as a deterrent and cite similar statistical studies as evidence for this position (Fitzpatrick 3; Hawkins 1). Fitzpatrick also explains that Marshall would remind “us that the question with respect to deterrence is not whether the death penalty is a deterrent but whether it is a better deterrent than life in imprisonment” (53). The literature reviewed seems to overwhelmingly suggest that capital punishment is not the better deterrent.

# REVISED PARAGRAPHS

The literature on capital punishment suggests that it fails as a deterrent in two key ways. First, much of the literature suggests that capital punishment does not lower the crime rate. Helen Prejean, in *Deadman Walking*, clearly notes that capital punishment does little to lower the crime rate. Prejean argues that the “evidence that executions do not deter crime is conclusive [...] the U.S. murder rate is no higher in states that do not have the death penalty than those who do” (110). Prejean’s point is reiterated from a historical perspective in “Death and the American.” Here, the author notes that despite the social and economic upheavals that occurred from the 1930s to the 1960s, the crime rate barely changed (2). However, after the reinstatement of the death penalty in the 1960s, the author notes that “crime rates soared” (2). Steven Hawkins points out that law enforcement officials also agree that the death penalty has failed to stop crime. He explains that a 1995 Peter D. Hart Research Associates survey found that police chiefs believe the death penalty to be “the least effective way of reducing crime” (1).

Some of the literature suggests that, in addition to failing to lower the crime rate, capital punishment can lead to more crime. In an interview with Helen Prejean, Judy Pennington notes that in 1987, the crime rate in New Orleans went up 16.3 percent in the quarter following eight executions (7). In *Deadman Walking*, Prejean elaborates on her position that capital punishment can be related to an increase in crime. She notes that in Canada in 1975, the murder rate peaked “one year before the death penalty was abolished” (110). Capital punishment opponents like Thurgood Marshall and Donald Cabana agree with Prejean that capital punishment has failed as a deterrent and cite similar statistical studies as evidence for this position (Fitzpatrick 3; Hawkins 1). Fitzpatrick also explains that Marshall would remind “us that the question with respect to deterrence is not whether the death penalty is a deterrent but whether it is a better deterrent than life in imprisonment” (53). The literature reviewed seems to overwhelmingly suggest that capital punishment is not the better deterrent.

## SAMPLE #2

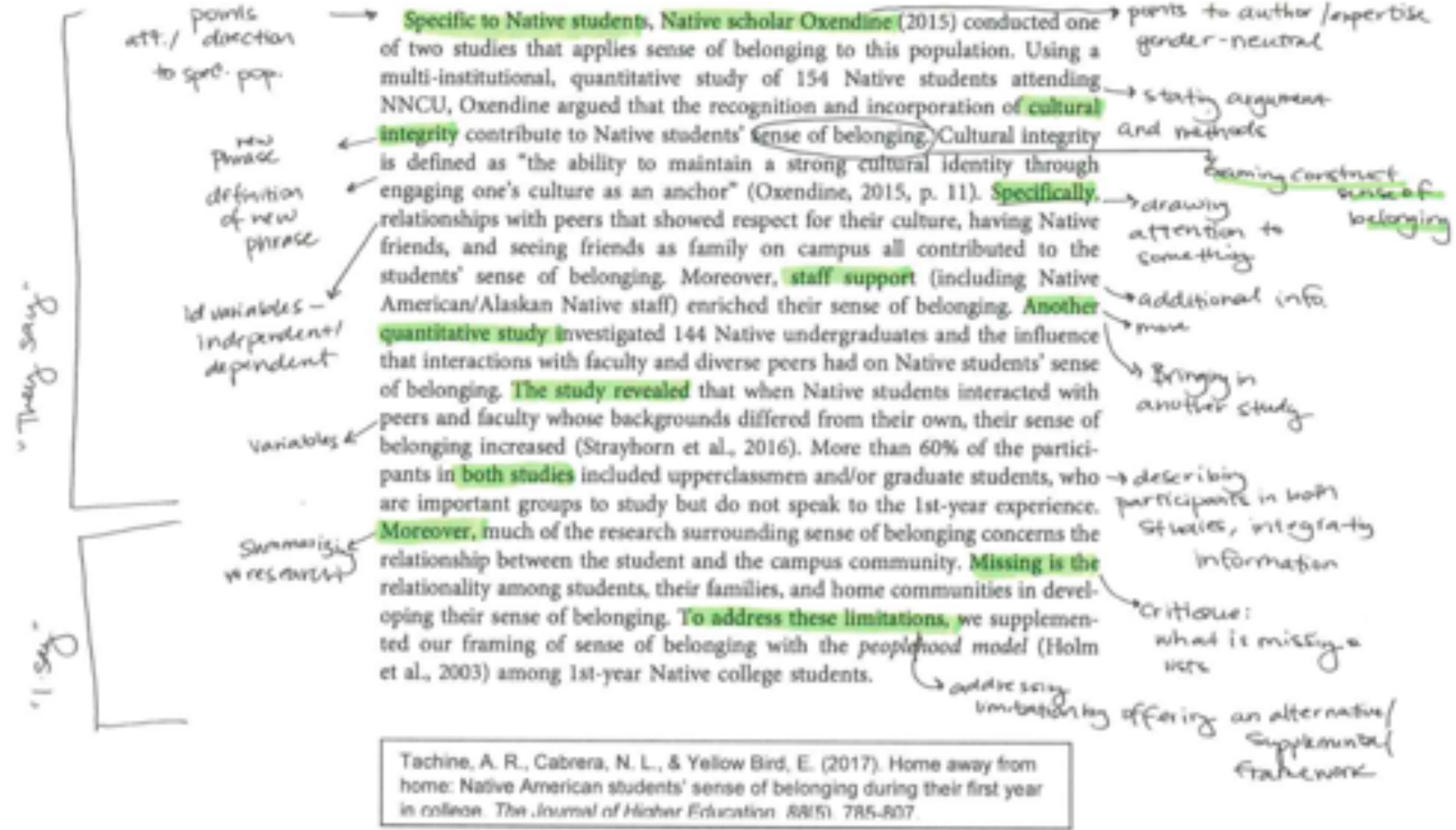
---

Identify “moves” the authors make to transition and develop arguments in the literature review.

From “Writing Literature Reviews” by Rocio Mendoza at Claremont Graduate University Center for Writing & Rhetoric

Specific to Native students, Native scholar Oxendine (2015) conducted one of two studies that applies sense of belonging to this population. Using a multi-institutional, quantitative study of 154 Native students attending NNCU, Oxendine argued that the recognition and incorporation of cultural integrity contribute to Native students’ sense of belonging. Cultural integrity is defined as “the ability to maintain a strong cultural identity through engaging one’s culture as an anchor” (Oxendine, 2015, p. 11). Specifically, relationships with peers that showed respect for their culture, having Native friends, and seeing friends as family on campus all contributed to the students’ sense of belonging. Moreover, staff support (including Native American/Alaskan Native staff) enriched their sense of belonging. Another quantitative study investigated 144 Native undergraduates and the influence that interactions with faculty and diverse peers had on Native students’ sense of belonging. The study revealed that when Native students interacted with peers and faculty whose backgrounds differed from their own, their sense of belonging increased (Strayhorn et al., 2016). More than 60% of the participants in both studies included upperclassmen and/or graduate students, who are important groups to study but do not speak to the 1st-year experience. Moreover, much of the research surrounding sense of belonging concerns the relationship between the student and the campus community. Missing is the relationality among students, their families, and home communities in developing their sense of belonging. To address these limitations, we supplemented our framing of sense of belonging with the *peoplehood model* (Holm et al., 2003) among 1st-year Native college students.

Tachine, A. R., Cabrera, N. L., & Yellow Bird, E. (2017). Home away from home: Native American students’ sense of belonging during their first year in college. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 88(5), 785-807.



## Breaking Down an article - lit review

# CONCLUDING LITERATURE REVIEWS

What are the contributions of this literature to the field?

Return to your thesis statement or RQ

What are the overall strengths? What are the overall weaknesses?

What might be missing?

What are some next steps for research? The next steps should explicitly address how to “correct” for strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.

# SAMPLE CONCLUSION

Yang, T.M. & Maxwell, T.A. (2011).  
Information-sharing in public  
organizations: A literature review of  
interpersonal, intra-organizational and  
inter-organizational success factors.  
*Government Information Quarterly*, 28,  
164–175.

## 7. Conclusion

In sum, at the practitioner level, the frameworks suggest several activities that might improve organizations' chances for successful information sharing. At an operational level, establishment of information systems that minimize changes to internal processes and information flow appears to be important to success. Promotion of a culture of information stewardship as opposed to ownership; strong leadership support to information sharing efforts; legislative and regulatory mandates; reward systems that promote information sharing both within and across organizations; the establishment of shared goals; and the development of ongoing trusted relationships based on mutual understanding of needs and concerns and shared responsibility are all positive actions suggested by the frameworks.

Information sharing across organizations is a key strategic activity for organizations in the public and private sector. By having a clear and comprehensive understanding of the factors that support and constrain the development of effective systems to support information exchange and analysis and improve accuracy and timeliness of decisions, policy makers, and practitioners can proceed with greater confidence in their outcomes. In addition, researchers can more accurately and efficiently target their research agendas to focus on the most critical aspects of this complex problem. It is hoped that the frameworks provided in this paper can assist in these critical undertakings.

# COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

---

Sources in your literature review do not clearly relate to the research problem;

---

You do not take sufficient time to define and identify the most relevant sources to use in the literature review related to the research problem;

---

Relies exclusively on secondary analytical sources rather than including relevant primary research studies or data;

---

Uncritically accepts another researcher's findings and interpretations as valid, rather than examining critically all aspects of the research design and analysis;

---

Does not describe the search procedures that were used in identifying the literature to review;\*\*

---

Only includes research that validates assumptions and does not consider contrary findings and alternative interpretations found in the literature.

\*\*check w/ your professor

# REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

- Boston College Libraries. (2018). "Writing the Literature Review."  
<https://libguides.bc.edu/litreview/gettingstarted>
- Feak, C.B. & Swales, J.M. (2009). *Telling a Research Story: Writing a Literature Review*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Feak, C.B. & Swales, J.M. (2012). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Gacho, F. (2018). "Writing the Literature Review."  
<http://cmgtwriting.uscannenber.org/writing-the-literature-review/>
- USC Library Research Guide. (2019). "The Literature Review."  
<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/literaturereview>